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Documentation of ERA Reports

1. We agree that serious consideration should be given to improving documentation procedures to speed up all stages in the preparation and processing of reports. The elimination of sources from the published edition of the report would only save typing time at the final stage of production.

2. We also believe that many readers will regret the proposed omission of specific documentation as to type of source, its timeliness, and its evaluation, available in the present system of documentation, are all regarded as useful to the serious reader and facilitate his judgment of the reliability of the product.

3. The proposals to publish only references to key sources or to publish generalized bibliographic discussions of the sources used in particular reports would deprive many readers of the advantages of detailed documentation.

4. In lieu of the proposed drastic reduction of documentation the following suggestions are offered to enhance the efficiency of report writing and editing, while preserving the advantages of the present system:

a. Require analysts to be critical in selecting points to be sourced by eliminating the documentation of 1) generally known information and 2) minor facts or generalizations.

b. Discourage the practice of providing multiple documentation of single facts or generalizations, when multiple documentation is duplicatory in nature.

c. Eliminate the repetition of lengthy titles by encouraging the use of cross references in subsequent citations to the note in which the reference is first made.

SUBJECT: Documentation of ERA Reports

d. Encourage analysts to adopt a unit-card system of documentation. Under this system each documentary citation is entered on a numbered card during the writing of the first draft of a report. Only one number will be assigned to a given cited document and this number will be used each time this document is cited. Recopying and renumbering of the citations in successive drafts is thereby eliminated. If provision is made for the analyst to submit these cards to St/PB with the draft report then the typing of citations can be averted until the report is finally typed for reproduction. Citation numbers assigned by the analyst in the first draft are retained until the final editing of the manuscript by St/PB. The analyst, editorial, and typing time saved by this method of documentation should be sufficient to support the continued inclusion of documentation in published reports.

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